

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03  
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SSM-03  
TRSE-00 OMB-01 ACDA-07 IO-13 COME-00 EB-07 LAB-04  
SIL-01 /092 W

-----181332Z 078788 /65

R 181113Z JAN 77  
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4469  
INFO AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 1 OF 2 TEL AVIV 370

E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: ELAB, PINT, IS  
SUBJECT: HISTADRUT ELECTIONS SET FOR JUNE

SUMMARY: HISTADRUT ELECTIONS HAVE BEEN SET FOR JUNE 21  
AND ITS CONGRESS IS TO TAKE PLACE IN EARLY SEPTEMBER.  
FOLLOWING THE MAY KNESSET ELECTIONS, THE HISTADRUT  
ELECTION CAMPAIGN, ALREADY IN HIGH GEAR, IS BOUND TO BE  
AFFECTED BY THE POWER STRUGGLE WITHIN THE LABOR PARTY,  
THE OUTCOME OF THE KNESSET ELECTION, AND THE FUTURE COM-  
POSITION OF THE GOVERNMENT. WHILE A LABOR PARTY DOMINATED  
COALITION LED BY INCUMBENT SECRETARY GENERAL MESHEL  
APPEARS AS OF NOW LIKELY TO RETAIN CONTROL OF HISTADRUT,  
THE LABOR PARTY FACTION MAY LOSE ITS PRESENT MAJORITY.  
MOREOVER, A NUMBER OF BOTH STRUCTURAL AND PERSONALITY  
CHANGES ARE EXPECTED TO TAKE PLACE AT THE NEXT CONGRESS.  
(END OF SUMMARY).

1. WITH THE DILEMMA OF WHETHER TO HOLD HISTADRUT  
ELECTIONS BEFORE OR AFTER THE KNESSET ELECTION RESOLVED  
(BY SETTING THE KNESSET ELECTIONS IN MAY)  
AND WITH THE LINKAGE BETWEEN THE FATE OF THE GOVERNMENT  
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COALITION AND THE HISTADRUT LEADERSHIP THEREBY  
DIMINISHED, THE HISTADRUT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE HAS  
NOW DECIDED TO HOLD THE HISTADRUT ELECTIONS ON JUNE 21.  
SECRETARY GENERAL YERUHAM MESHEL PREFERS AN EARLIER  
DATE (JUNE 14) BECAUSE HE FEARS THE LATER DATE MAY  
REDUCE VOTER PARTICIPATION DUE TO THE BEGINNING OF  
SUMMER VACATIONS. HOWEVER, HISTADRUT'S DAVAR OF

JANUARY 13 SPECULATES THAT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE APPROVAL OF JUNE 21 DATE IS LIKELY TO PREVAIL.

2. THE HISTADRUT ELECTION CAMPAIGN IS BOUND TO HAVE BROAD NATIONAL POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE BECAUSE IT WILL BE INVOLVED WITH BOTH THE PRE-LABOR PARTY CONVENTION MANEUVERS--RABIN'S STRUGGLE FOR RETAINING THE LABOR PARTY LEADERSHIP--AND THE KNESSET ELECTION CAMPAIGN. NOT ONLY DO KEY HISTADRUT OFFICERS PLAY DUAL ROLES IN THE LABOR PARTY AND THE ALIGNMENT AS WELL AS IN HISTADRUT, BUT THEIR ORGANIZATION AFFECTS ECONOMIC POLICY AND SOCIAL SERVICES' DECISIONS AND WILL REFLECT THE DECISION OF MAPAM ON WHETHER TO REMAIN IN THE ALIGNMENT. HISTADRUT INSTITUTIONS--SUCH AS SOLEL BONEH, KUPAT HOLIM, AND THE SHIKUN OVDIM (HOUSING CORPORATION)--WHICH HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN ALLEGATIONS OF FINANCIAL SCANDALS WHICH DROVE HOUSING MINISTER OFER TO SUICIDE AND WHICH MAY ALSO AFFECT THE FUTURE OF OTHER CABINET MEMBERS, WILL BE IMPORTANT CAMPAIGN ISSUES.

3. SOME 1.3 MILLION MEMBERS, 20,000 MORE THAN IN 1973, CONSTITUTING A SUBSTANTIAL PART OF THE ISRAELI ELECTORATE--INCLUDING 90,000 ARABS--ARE EXPECTED TO VOTE. UNDER PRESENT RULES, THEY WILL ELECT SOME 1,500 DELEGATES TO THE HISTADRUT CONVENTION, TENTATIVELY SCHEDULED FOR SEPTEMBER; ALTHOUGH THERE IS NOW AN INTERNAL DEBATE ABOUT SUBSTANTIALLY ENLARGING THE NUMBER OF DELEGATES AS THE LABOR PARTY HAS DONE FOR ITS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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UPCOMING CONVENTION. THE DELEGATES WILL BE ELECTED ON THE BASIS OF VOTES CAST FOR PARTY LISTS, WITH THE FINAL SELECTION OF DELEGATES TO BE DETERMINED ON A PROPORTIONAL BASIS ACCORDING TO THE NUMBER OF VOTES CAST FOR EACH PARTY. HIGH RANKING ON THE LISTS IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE THIS ASSURES ELECTIONS OF KEY CANDIDATES. (AFFILIATED TRADE AND PROFESSIONAL UNIONS WILL SET THEIR OWN DATES FOR ELECTIONS AND CONVENTIONS AFTER THE HISTADRUT CONVENTION.) THE COALITION OF PARTIES CONSTITUTING THE POLICY MAKING EXECUTIVE BUREAU WILL BE DETERMINED ON THE BASIS OF AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE PARTY RECEIVING THE LARGEST NUMBER OF VOTES AND OTHER PARTIES READY TO SUPPORT IT.

4. ACCORDING TO HISTADRUT BYLAWS, THE CONVENTION WILL ELECT FROM ITS DELEGATES A 500 MEMBER NATIONAL COUNCIL WHICH, IN TURN, WILL ELECT A 167 MEMBER EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, A 50 MEMBER CONTROL COMMISSION, A 22 MEMBER EXECUTIVE BUREAU, AND THE SECRETARY GENERAL.

THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE COUNCIL, THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND THE CONTROL COMMISSION IS BASED ON THE SAME PROPORTIONAL BASIS AS THE DELEGATES TO THE CONVENTION-- ACCORDING TO THE VOTES FOR EACH PARTY LIST. THE EXECUTIVE BUREAU, HOWEVER, IS COMPOSED ONLY OF MEMBERS OF THE RULING COALITION AND THUS DOES NOT INCLUDE OPPOSITION MEMBERS. THE BUREAU APPOINTS THE HEADS OF THE HISTADRUT ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ENTERPRISES (OVRAT HOVDIM) ON THE BASIS OF PARTY AFFILIATION.

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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 2 OF 2 TEL AVIV 370

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, PINT, IS

SUBJECT: HISTADRUT ELECTIONS SET FOR JUNE

5. ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS WILL BE MADE BY THE HISTADRUT ORGANIZATION DEPARTMENT HEADED BY AHARON HAREL (LABOR PARTY--EX-RAFI). KEY PROCEDURAL ISSUES YET TO BE RESOLVED ARE: A. THE NUMBER OF CONVENTION DELEGATES; B. A PROPOSAL THAT NO GROUP RECEIVING LESS THAN 1 PERCENT OF TOTAL VOTES SHOULD BE REPRESENTED IN THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OR RECEIVE A PROPORTIONAL SHARE OF FUNDS (THIS WOULD REDUCE THE 13 DIFFERENT PARTIES AND GROUPINGS WHICH ARE NOW REPRESENTED IN THE COUNCIL BY ELIMINATING SOME OF THE MILITANT RIGHT AND LEFT WING SPLINTER GROUPS, SUCH AS THE BLACK PANTHERS); C. THE QUESTION OF RANKING THE NAMES OF THE PARTY LISTS ACCORDING TO THE LEVELS OF POSITIONS TO WHICH THEY ASPIRE (THIS WOULD MAKE THE

HEAD OF THE PARTY LIST WITH THE LARGEST NUMBER OF VOTES AUTOMATICALLY SECRETARY GENERAL AND WOULD AVOID DESIGNATING KEY OFFICERS ON THE BASIS OF BACKROOM MANEUVERS WITHOUT REGARD TO THE SUPPORT WHICH THEY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MAY ENJOY); D. TIGHTER RULES GOVERNING THE CONDUCT OF THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN SIMILAR TO THOSE APPLYING TO KNESSET ELECTIONS; E. SIMPLIFICATION OF VERIFICATION OF VOTER ELIBILITY ON THE BASIS OF DUES PAYMENT RECORDS; F. ESTABLISHMENT OF A PERMANENT ELECTION COMMITTEE IN PLACE OF THE CURRENT PRACTICE OF NOMINATING A NEW COMMITTEE FOR EACH ELECTION CAMPAIGN.

6. COMMENT: GIVEN THE SIZE OF THE HISTADRUT ELECTORATE (CONSTITUTING A MAJOR PART OF THE GENERAL ISRAELI ELECTORATE), THE OUTCOME OF THE KNESSET ELECTIONS (WHICH WILL HAVE TAKEN PLACE A MONTH EARLIER) AND THE FUTURE SHAPE OF THE LABOR PARTY ARE BOUND TO AFFECT ALSO THE FUTURE COALITION RUNNING THE HISTADRUT. THE ISSUE OF THE ALLEGED INVOLVEMENT OF THE ECONOMIC AND ENTERPRENEURIAL SECTOR OF THE HISTADRUT IN THE GROWING NUMBER OF SCANDALS IS ALSO LIKELY TO ASSUME INCREASING IMPORTANCE AS THE CAMPAIGN ROLLS ON. MESHEL'S HARDENING POSITION VIS-A-VIS THE GOVERNMENT AND ESPECIALLY FINANCE MINISTER RABINOWITZ ON CUH ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ISSUES AS SUBSIDIES, MORE EQUITABLE TAXATION AND PROTECTION OF WELFARE AND PENSION BENEFITS BY MEANS OF LINKAGE WITH THE COST OF LIVING, IS LIKELY TO ASSURE HIM RE-ELECTION DESPITE THE CONTINUING EROSION OF RANK AND FILE CONFIDENCE IN HISTADRUT LEADERSHIP. HOWEVER, THERE ARE LIKELY TO BE CONSIDERABLE PERSONNEL CHANGES IN THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND BUREAU AND AMONG THE HEADS OF THE VARIOUS HISTADRUT DEPARTMENTS. THERE IS ALSO LIKELY TO BE AN ARAB MEMBER INCLUDED IN THE 22 MEMBER EXECUTIVE BUREAU. MAPAM'S DECISION WHETHER TO REMAIN WITHIN THE HISTADRUT ALIGNMENT WILL BE DETERMINED BY ITS DECISION RE CONTINUING THE ALIGNMENT WITH THE LABOR PARTY IN THE KNESSET ELECTION. SHOULD MAPAM DECIDE TO CONTINUE IN THE ALIGNMENT, THE LATTER IS LIKELY TO RETAIN ITS MAJORITY IN THE HISTADRUT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND NATIONAL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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COUNCIL. HOWEVER, IT IS NO LONGER CERTAIN THAT THE LABOR PARTY BY ITSELF WILL BE ABLE TO PRESERVE ITS

PRESENT MAJORITY IN BOTH BODIES.  
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## Message Attributes

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